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PROPOSAL FOR THE NGO CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR TANZANIAN NGOS

Proposal Made by – TANZANIA ASSOCIATION OF NGOS (TANGO)

On the Occasion of the NGO Forum

July: 18th – 20th 2001

Code of Conduct for NGOs in Tanzania
Presented to the NGO Forum 18 – 20 July, 2001

Introduction To be written by the Chairperson in the final version.

Preamble

- In Tanzania, NGOs started activities way back in the colonial era, mainly aiming at providing services and spreading religions. With the government taking up the role of service providers after gaining independence, the character of NGOs changed towards associations with a social function, such as sports clubs. In the nineties, the political-economic changes stimulated NGOs to again become active in delivering services. More recently, NGOs have expanded their horizons and their different aim can be categorized as follows:
 1. Service provision: Health education, water, sanitation, relief, welfare, emergency and refugee services.
 2. Support services: Professional services, training, supplies and management consultancies.
 3. Policy advocacy: Human rights, gender, land rights, advocacy for change of awareness, children's rights, etc.
 4. Fundraising and disbursing: trust funds, foundations, etc.
 5. Development NGOs: aiming at empowering communities to master their own development.

- NGOs as meant in this Code of Conduct are all voluntary (“out of free will”) organizations that are non-governmental, not for profit sharing, non self serving and not affiliated to a political party, that are independent and aim at the promotion of social justice and development in all of Tanzania. NGOs can be national as well as international, secular as well as “faith based” NGOs. Our shared societal vision is our unifying force: The creation and perpetuation of a strong and vibrant society in which NGOs are taking an active and effective role in promoting people- centered development and in which critical partnership with the government and the private sector plays a critical role. We seek to participate in advancing development initiatives that are based on the values of justice, peace, good governance, human rights, gender equality and equity, and sustainable human development.

- To be credible and relied upon, we see the importance to adopt a voluntary self-regulation in the form of this Code of Conduct. Not only will the Code uplift the standards of conduct, and thus improve the functioning of NGOs, it will also contribute to a better and more realistic image of our sector, specifically of those NGOs that sign the Code.

- With signing of the Code of Conduct by the official representative of the NGO, the governing body of the signing NGO will be committing itself to adhere to the described Standards of Conduct. This implies that the organizations will stimulate the absorption of the standards described here in all formal and informal aspects of the organization, including internalization by its employees.

Standards of Conduct

1. Values

Although we are diverse in our activities – of which we take pride -, we are united by our shared and continuous strive for a better, more dynamic and socially just society. This shared cause has led us to come up with the following collective values to which we are committed:

Unity and solidarity among all NGOs, among different NGO coalitions and among our primary stakeholders

Networking, building positive relationships and promoting dialogue with those organizations and institutions, be it other civil society, governmental or private sector organizations that support us in furthering our vision and mission.

Sharing information to us means more than distributing documents. Conscientious sharing of information within the NGO sector will contribute greatly to more efficient use of resources. Sharing information is a useful and unselfish approach to making information available to others. It demands investment from us to understand the information needs of others and to offer what we have on our own initiative.

Innovation and creativity are of vital importance in defying the many difficulties that we find on our way, and we will not only give room, but also stimulate each other to develop new and unique solutions.

We believe in *dialogue*, in the attainment of consensus through negotiation: The strength of dialogue, as opposed to the dialogue of strength.

Participation: We believe that the facilitation of people, communities, and organizations into becoming agents of their own empowerment and development, leads to effective and efficient participation in development.

We are committed to mainstreaming, analyzing and putting into proper perspective the issue of *gender equality and equity* in all our activities, programs and initiatives.

Volunteerism: We value the sacrifices made by individuals and CBOs/NGOs in pursuance of organizational interests.

Integrity: We believe in the honest performance of duties by the leaders and managers of our organizations. This will ensure proper use of resources, good images and trustworthiness.

Transparency: We are proud of our work and learn from our failure and successes. We encourage others to learn about our work and from our failures and successes. Consequently we value openness in our practices.

Autonomy: We believe in and respect the sovereignty of each individual NGO and CBO.

Excellence: We will strive for excellence in the implementation of all our programs and activities.

2. Governance

The effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of our work depend on the governing structures of our organizations. As acknowledged organizations we recognize the importance of establishing and maintaining well functioning structures that will govern the internal functioning of our individual organizations. Committed, experienced and responsible individuals are critical ingredients for this.

To this end we will:

- Ensure that our individual organizations have clear and shared Vision, Mission, Objectives & Policies guiding our work. We will have defined participatory ways to modify them, involving primary and other stakeholders in a sincere manner,
- Specify the work and powers of our governance structure, the frequency of meeting and their quorums,
- Have in place a policy that prohibits direct or indirect conflict of interest by members of our governance structure, members of our organization, employees and volunteers. This includes their obligation to excuse themselves from decision where they have, or are perceived to have, a vested interest. It also includes that none of our office bearers can hold at the same time a decision making position within the government or any political party.
- Ensure that our governance structure understands and accepts the ultimate responsibility for overall policy making and for governance of all aspects of the organization
- Develop well defined, written policies and procedure to be followed, which relate to all our employees, members and volunteers. Such policies must adhere to the laws of Tanzania and must protect the rights of our employees, members, partners and volunteers.
- Aim for a gender balance in our governance structure.
- Members of our governance structure render their services freely and voluntarily, except for the reimbursement of essential costs incurred during service
- We respect the values carried by donors and the government. We will however, maintain independence and resist conditions that compromise the mission of our individual organizations

3. Human Resources

We realize that human capacity and skilled leadership are the most essential ingredients of our organizations. Therefore we shall continuously improve on our management and leadership practices appropriate to the organization's mission, activities and governance structure.

- We will promote in our organizations a learning and participatory organizational culture, which encourages creativity, diversity, responsibility and respect
- We will implement in an impartial manner the organization's Human Resources Policies, including recruitment, staff development, rights and obligations of staff, and disciplinary & grievance procedures.

4. Moral and ethical integrity

The global liberalization process generates forces that carry the potential to deteriorate the moral and ethical standards of a nation, leading to corrosion of the unity of the country. As organizations representing and serving the communities of Tanzania, we will

- Strive to be examples of responsible development agents and immerse our organizations with the moral and ethical values necessary to achieve sustainable development
- We shall be truthful in all our activities and refrain from practices that undermine the moral and ethical integrity of our organizations and country
- We shall utilize all the resources and privileges available to our organizations in order to meet our mission and strategic objectives
- Only accept funds from organizations, which share our organizational aim, not undermining our independence and mission.

5. Finances

Funds are made available to us to serve our consistency by utilizing the funds towards the agreed objectives of our projects and we regard those funds as if they were paid to us by the communities. Financially, we therefore are primarily accountable to our members and/or recipients, and secondarily to donors and other stakeholders. We are responsible to develop and improve our financial management strategies, which will improve our efficiency and our ability to inform the public about the origin and use of resources. Consequently we will:

- Develop sound financial policies and systems, which:
 - Are in compliance with accepted accounting and auditing practices
 - Contain a policy on outside honoraria, in order to avoid double payment of our staff and the staff of other organizations
 - Ensure sound mechanisms of purchasing goods and services, free of vested interests
 - Adopt realistic budgeting, monitoring and reporting practices
 - Keep fundraising and administration costs as a minimum
 - Ensure that funds are only used for the intended purpose
 - Provide clear and transparent accounting to our constituency, the government, donors and other interested parties
 - Includes conducting an external audit by a registered external auditor in case our annual budget is above Tsh 10,000,000.
- Be truthful and honest concerning raising, using and accounting of funds
- Introduce and apply an active policy to avoid misuse and corruption in and around our organization and which ensures charging persons formally and publicly for any attempt at fraud, theft or misappropriation
- We, as signatories of this conduct, will promote further development of more detailed standards, which will lead to a more coherent mode of operation. The elected “Trustees of the NGO Code of Conduct”, as described in section 7. *National Forum for NGOs*, will prepare new and more detailed standards for discussion and approval during the Annual National NGO Forum. Subjects will vary and will arise from the signatories. Agreed upon standards will be attached as annexes to this Code of Conduct and form part of it.

6. Accountability

Our commitment to bring about development and social justice is based on a culture of participation, complete accountability within our organizations, and of transparency in all the work we do. To this end we will

- Hold Annual General Meetings, disclosing full and accurate information
- Ensure regular, participatory evaluations
- Hold strategic planning processes which include the genuine participation of stakeholders
- Make available to all concerned and interested actors our financial and activity reports.

7. National Forum of NGOs

The NGO forum, which takes place annually, will elect the following standing committees:
Discipline and grievance committee.

All potential or actual conflicts arising between signatory NGOs can be brought to the attention of the committee for mediation.

Committee “Trustees of the Code of Conduct”

The committee will examine the functionality of the Code of Conduct during the year and propose amendments of the Code to the NGO forum.

Conclusion.

The list of NGOs signing the Code of Conduct will be attached to this document and will be updated yearly.

Taking this Code of Conduct for NGOs as a starting point, NGOs are strongly encouraged to establish thematic Codes of Conduct in a similar manner.